

Kentucky Marker Papers

Primary – Grade 12

~ without Annotations ~



Kentucky Department
of Education

Winter 2002, reprint

Gene Wilhoit, Commissioner
Kentucky Department of Education

EDITORIALS

GRADE 4 - EDITORIAL

Money Maker

"Mom, will you buy me this flashlight? "Mom, will you buy me a knife for scouts?" "Mom, will you rent a movie for me?"

Have you ever put your parents in this situation? Children are always asking parents for money to buy things they want. For this reason, children should definitely work for their allowance.

When children work for their money, they learn responsibility. They learn the value of money and how to manage it. They also learn the value of work. While I work, I'm learning to take care of myself. My mom always says, "It takes everyone to make the house run smoothly." When I don't do what I'm supposed to do, I make it hard on everyone else.

When children grow older, they'll have to get jobs at some point. If they worked for money while they were young, they would be smarter about how to use it. They wouldn't just go out and spend their money foolishly after they worked hard for it. They'd probably bank it!

Working for your money makes you be very careful what you spend it on too. Once you spend it, it is gone forever!

Many children like myself, do chores around the house to earn their allowance. I am learning to be responsible with money and work.

Those children who receive allowance without work probably take advantage of their parents' hard earned money. They shouldn't do that. Some day, they might find themselves a beggar on the streets because they didn't learn the value of money!

PROBLEMS WITH PEANUTS

Problems with peanuts are popping up everywhere. For example, the restaurant "Lone Star" banned peanuts because there were a couple instances where patrons were severely injured when they slipped on peanut shells which were discarded on the floor. Then there was the incident of the "Allergic Reaction" on the airlines. Patrons are receiving peanuts on their flights as a courtesy from the airlines. The people who are allergic to peanuts don't have the option of another snack.

I think that they should start banning peanuts from other public areas too. Schools for example, "_____ Middle School". The sixth and seventh graders were trying samples of their chocolate fundraisers when a young girl knew she was allergic to peanuts but unknowingly ate a piece of chocolate that contained peanuts. She had such a bad reaction that she passed away.

Since these incidents are happening all over I think that we should start banning peanuts from schools and other public areas. Even if the students do tell you and bring medication in, the reaction could be so sudden that there is no time to react.

I hope that you you can see my point of view and you have learned from it.

It's your Decision to Save the Animals!

If you have been to a nearby Humane Society ask yourself is this nice enough for these poor animals or, can this be nicer? Well, I can tell you my opinion of the Humane Society in _____ Kentucky, just plain pitiful!

In _____'s Humane Society, there are alot of things you will see, hear, and feel. For instants, what you will see are cages and cages inside the building and outside the building with water and food but, inside them you will see lots of dogs that look at you with those, "puppy dog eyes."

What you will hear are barks and whimpers and lots of cries from puppies, which will make your heart melt!

What you will feel when you hold and love those animals at the Humane Society is that they are dirty and wet and with that a horrible smell! I REALLY DON'T THINK THESE ANIMALS DESERVE THIS, DO YOU?

A friend of mine, C D agrees with my statements but she has statements of her own. "I think the Humane Society is dreadful," says C D . She also says that she is very discouraged that they have to put animals to sleep because the Humane Society is so overpopulated. She also wants to add that they need to make the facilities a little bit nicer.

But she also has some encouraging words for the Humane Society. She says, I am happy that the Humane Society is trying to do so much for the animals. She also thinks that if some people could help raise money for the Humane Society they should expand for the animals.

Most of the people that I have brought this subject to have agreed with what I have said and seen. Please help in this fight, adopt an animal . SO YOU MAKE THE DECISION TO SAVE THE ANIMALS, ADOPT ONE!

GRADE 7 - EDITORIAL

"Physical Education"

The amount of time devoted to physical education should be expanded in all public schools. Currently, we have only forty-five minutes a day for nine weeks of gym class at my middle school. This is typical of all other middle schools in F_____ County, too. This time should be raised to one whole hour and/or for another nine weeks of school. This way, we would have it for at least half of our school year.

One reason I think gym class should be expanded is that it is good exercise for students. Many middle-school students just sit at home and watch television or play video games and hardly ever get any exercise. PE class is very helpful to them as well as to kids who already get some exercise.

A lot of kids do not play sports or even know about some sports. Gym class introduces them to sports and the kids might decide they enjoy playing and want to join an organized team. When kids are on organized teams, they

don't have time to hang out on the streets. They do not want to use drugs either because it affects their ability to play.

Playing sports and taking physical education classes teaches children self-discipline. They learn to follow the rules and how to get along with other children. Sports stress the fact that breaking rules, or laws for that matter, is bad. Because of this, we will not have as much crime or violence. In effect, taking physical education classes will improve our society.

Children learn to stay healthy by taking gym. They learn how to exercise properly and how good it makes you feel and look. The kids will want to exercise more and our society will consist of stronger, healthier people.

Playing sports makes kids feel good about themselves. It raises their self-esteem and teaches them that they have to work in order to reach their goals. Physical Education class is the only time some kids get to play sports or exercise. For this reason the amount of time devoted to gym class should most definitely be extended.

GRADE 7 - EDITORIAL

Indoors vs. Outdoors

Attention! All Faculty of Middle School, please listen. I have an important issue to discuss with you. The idea of being stuck inside a classroom from 8:00 a.m. till 2:55 p.m. is almost 7 hrs! No outside breaks! Does that sound appealing to you? Well, I guess you could call it appealing if you were a textbook sitting on a shelf at Middle School. But I am alive! Read on to see what I mean about indoors vs. outdoors.

Being indoors all day sure isn't fun if I say so myself. I mean we don't even get to stretch our stiff muscles. Also not being able to move around causes you to get sleepy and not be alert. Sleepy students get off task from assignments and miss hearing important facts from the teacher. Just a little exercise and fresh air outdoors does help you be more alert.

We also need time to socialize with each other. Then we are able to talk about our likes and differences. This can also be a time to make more friends. We need to be outside for this procedure because there is not enough room in the classroom or hallway. In the classroom we basically get to talk with the students at our table. If we could be outdoors both 6th grade teams could have break together.

There are other reasons I think we should be outside. The sunlight gives us a very important vitamin. This vitamin is D. Vitamin D is important for healthy bones. Being in the sun is a natural source of vitamin D.

The fresh air helps our lungs be healthy and makes us feel better. Sometimes the air inside becomes stale. Dust from chalkboards and cause irritation and coughing. Many viruses are spread indoors when students cough. The common cold is one of these viruses. I think any time spent outside helps lower the chance of catching a cold.

We can also see how the seasons and weather change. During school we study how the seasons change and how the temperatures are different. I think the old saying of "A picture is worth a thousand words," is really true. Seeing the first signs of spring, feeling the heat of a hot summer day, watching the leaves change color and fall and feeling a snowflake are all educational.

During inside break we are allowed to buy a drink or snack. If we were outside a spill wouldn't be as bad, because inside we might ruin a paper, book or project that we put a lot of time and effort in. Outside the cleanup if needed would be easy.

I also think that teachers need an outside break because they have a lot of stress in the classroom. They could socialize with other teachers and benefit from the fresh air and sunshine too. If a teacher is having a stressfull day a word of encouragement from a friend can mean a lot.

Approximately 7 hrs. doesn't sound so bad when you have something to look forward to. When you get to school at 8:00 a.m. and you know that you are going to have an outside break the day seems shorter. You can concentrate and finish your task so you can enjoy break. I know when the weather is bad or too cool an indoor break is all we can have. But when the weather is nice it sure would be refreshing to enjoy break outside.

Expression or Desecration?

Why? Why do they do it? It makes no sense. People across the United States burn "Old Glory" (United States Flag) either as a form of protest or just for the heck of it.

Examples of desecration on American flag include: at Bloomington, IN: 29 flags (all donated by the veterans' families) were removed from their poles and burned without any justification. Another incident occurred in San Marcos, CA during a demonstration against Proposition 187. Individuals ignited an American flag, then when another flag was doused with lighter fluid, a student snatched the flag away in order to save the flag. Although, shortly after, he was brutally beaten as a result of his action. The act of desecrating such a sacred symbol to our country is ignorant; and inexcusable. This is why I am strongly against flag burning.

My opposition takes a different stance on the issue. The opposition argues that burning the flag of the United States of America is merely an act of expression. They believe this because the first amendment of the U.S. Constitution "supposedly" gives them this right. But this statement has no validity supporting it, nor does it have any truth. This is why I firmly oppose their idea.

First of all, the law clearly states that all citizens of the U.S. have the explicit right to express themselves clearly without infringing upon on

another person's rights. This statement is fully supported by the first amendment of the U.S. Constitution. By performing the act of flag desecration, flag burners infringe upon many people. Infringing meaning, damaging their emotional connection to the flag. To be more exact, the victims are the entire government of the United States of America and every citizen who respects and gazes at the flag with pride.

Another reason why I consider flag burning illogical is, my opposition is basically insulting and mocking every person who has ever shed their blood for this country by burning such a sacred symbol. Flag burners would change their opinion relatively fast if they ever discussed the issue with someone that has participated in a war to preserve our way of life.

Finally, the morality of burning the flag is extremely low. In fact, it has none. Flag burners consider burning the flag only a symbolic gesture of protest. They do not seem to understand the flag is an emblem of shed blood and lost lives. Something people look for as a beacon of hope and prosperity should not be burned, but in turn, put atop a high point and admired as an icon of peace and glory.

As I have said before, I am very firmly opposed to burning the American flag for self-expression. Before taking your stand on the issue, answer this question to yourself. Would you like "Old Glory" to be changed into "Old Ashes" all in the name of expression?

Genetic Research, How far should we go?

Genetic research can enable us to improve on nature, but many feel it is necessary to set boundaries regarding this very complex issue. Has the power to control nature been placed in the hands of man before he knows how to handle it responsibly?

Currently there is a race taking place called the Genome Project, a 15 year effort to draw the first detailed map of every gene in human DNA. Scientists expect to be finished mapping the human genome within the next year or two. With the entire human genetic blueprint, scientists will be able to get the best view ever into what keeps people healthy, and what makes them sick. Some doctors say that in 10 years, genetic tests will be as common as tongue depressors. All this knowledge does not come to us without a price. The same genetic information that might provide a cure for a disease may do a lot of damage. Many states have already passed laws prohibiting genetic discrimination in employment and health insurance. A TIME/CNN poll says that most people strongly oppose human genetic engineering for any purpose except to cure disease or grow more food. A 58% majority think that altering human genes is against the will of "God". The

people who answered the poll also put their finger on what may be the biggest problem of the genetic age: the likelihood that the secrets hidden in people's genes will someday be used against them. A single drop of blood would give a potential employer or insurer enough information to determine whether or not a person would be at risk of contracting a number of debilitating diseases. Of those polled, 90% think it should be illegal for an insurance company to use genetic tests to decide who to insure.

Discrimination by employers and insurance companies is only one fear that people have of genetic research. Some fear that by allowing scientists to manipulate genes, some madman could create a race of super humans to take over the world. Sounds like a bad science fiction movie, but the premise is one that will be possible in a few short years. Once the scientists have the information of the human genome, will they be able to resist playing with the building blocks of life? Who will be there to stop someone from ordering a genetically altered baby, one with super intelligence and good looks? If we could find the gene that makes someone a criminal, what should we do about it? When and where do we stop genetic alteration? Many advances in science have come from the less than perfect individual. If everyone were perfect we

would be depriving ourselves of the vast differences between people that make life interesting. Living would then cease to be a challenge since everything would come easily to everyone. It is then that I fear the drive that keeps us all going would no longer be present and people would lose their reason to exist, eventually leading to the downfall of the human race.

By stating the fears one may have of genetics, I don't want to overshadow the possible benefits of this type of research. Unlocking the secrets of our genes will someday provide us with cures to many of the life threatening illnesses of our time. I believe that scientific discoveries are a natural occurrence and it is impossible to try to stop them. However, the consequences of possessing this kind of information must be thoroughly thought out. Instead of trying to curb the scientific research we should be searching for an ethical solution that allows us to continue finding ways to fight disease and human suffering through gene therapy without infringing on the rights of the individual and without using genetics for vain or cosmetic purposes.

Free People Should Read Freely

By:

Each year, hundreds of books are challenged or banned in America's secondary schools. Each year, students are deprived of the knowledge these books hold inside their covers. Each year, new books are added to the list, and with it another chapter is shut on the education of our youth.

Censorship is by no means a new invention. Since before the birth of Christ, those in power have striven to assert their will for the "betterment" of society. Whether it be ancient Greeks condemning Socrates to death for his teachings to young Athenians or "modern" schoolboards challenging the use of *Huckleberry Finn* in the classroom, those in power have sought to suppress the tutelage of our young at their most inquisitive age.

Classic literature is being hoarded away from mainstream society. Of *Modern Library's* 1998 list of the Top

100 novels of the 20th century, seven of the top ten and 34 out of the Top 100 had been challenged or banned at some time in their printing life. How can a person be expected to fully gain a sense of the total understanding when over one-third of the century's greatest works have been restricted in some sense?

When the quest for knowledge is curtailed, the atmosphere stifles creativity and new ideas. The fear of rebuke plagues all those involved. Teachers are afraid to truly instruct, administrators fear public opinion, and the greatest injustice of all, writers may change content, not for artistic purposes, but to avoid controversy. Banned books will persevere, but unexpressed ideas are lost for eternity.

Literature is the mind's open market. One is free to choose from the vast selection at their own discretion. Each individual is given the liberty to parse the shelves of wisdom, selecting and embracing certain intellectual "goods" of their choosing. No one should invade on this model system. The only censure should be one's own self-judgment.

Books are not dangerous. They make you think, feel, and wonder. They make you ask questions. Everyone should be allowed the freedom to sift through every available resource and come up with their own conclusions on certain issues and events. No one person or entity should control the availability of information. Students can actually fend for themselves and make rational choices. When presented with all the information, students are able to make a logical, thoughtful conclusion based on his/her beliefs. When students begin to make these rational, intelligent decisions they become valuable and integral members of the community.

Does Our Library Censure What We Read?

According to a cross-check with *Modern Library's* list of the Top 100 novels of the century, 2 of the top 10 and 8 of the top 25 novels of the 20th century are not in the school's library.

"If there is a bedrock principle underlying the First Amendment, it is that Government may not prohibit the expression of an idea simply because society finds the idea itself offensive or disagreeable." — Supreme Court Justice William J. Brennan, *Texas v. Johnson*, 491 U.S. 397 (1989)

Books Challenged from 1996-1997:

According to International Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom

-The Scarlet Letter
Nathaniel Hawthorne
(Conflicts with the values of the community)

To Kill a Mockingbird
Lee Harper
Moby Dick
Herman Melville
The Joy Luck Club
Amy Tan

-Catcher in the Rye
J. D. Salinger
(Use of profanity.)

Of Mice and Men
John Steinbeck
A Separate Peace
John Knowles

-The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn
Mark Twain
(Racially offensive.)

Little House in the Big Woods
Laura Ingalls Wilder
-A Light in the Attic
Shel Silverstein
(Too dreary and negative.)

Viking Pride Battle for Lost Integrity

The Valhalla is a hall intended for honorable and reputable Vikings – not offensive, insulting hecklers. With the district basketball tournament on its way to our gym in February, Viking fans must understand their student rights, the regulations of the Kentucky High School Athletics Association, and their responsibility to represent _____ County maturely and tastefully. Harassing and badgering school spirit should not be exhibited at _____ County sporting events.

If a student has learned anything about our Constitution, they are aware that the First Amendment protects the fight to free expression. This information often acts as a shield for many student fans who clutch it firmly as profanities fill the majority of their taunting cheers. Unfortunately, the heckling spectators are only partially correct. The First Amendment is not absolute and the Supreme Court currently specifies at least nine

categories of “unprotected speech.” One of the “unprotected” forms of expression includes expression on school grounds that causes a material and substantial disruption of school activities.

Students’ right to free expression was defined further in the 1969 Supreme Court case *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District*. In the words of the Court, the *Tinker* case ruled that student speech that “materially disrupts class work or involved substantial disorder or invasion of the rights of others is . . . NOT immunized by constitutional guarantee of freedom of speech.” When our student section chants “fa---t,” “fatty,” or “You s—k” to an individual athlete, then the action of singling out one person and harassing them is an unnecessary attack against them. The previously described conduct invades their rights and violates the *Tinker* standard, therefore, it can be deemed uncalled for and disrespectful.

Taunting and fan misconduct is addressed also by the Kentucky High School Athletics Association by *Bylaw 17 – Practice of Sportsmanship*. Fans, just as athletes and coaches, must “practice the highest principles of sportsmanship and the ethics of competition.” It clarifies the punishable conduct as being the use of “insulting language” and “unsportsmanlike tactics.” Violations of the bylaw are typically punished by ejection from the event.

The KHSAA regulations relate closely to a student’s responsibility to represent _____ County in an honorable, dignified manner. As students, our behavior at school-sponsored events is a reflection on the quality of education and discipline we are offered at _____ County Senior High School. School spirit and pride is widely advocated by our administration and faculty, however they intend for it to be accomplished tastefully. It is not necessary, not is it the expectation of _____ County staff, that we lower our standards by publicly misbehaving and trashing opponents with vulgar slandering.

The behavior of our student crowd at sporting events does not need to cross the line of school spirit. If heckling and verbal attacks toward players and coaches define Viking pride, the First Amendment can not provide protection and we have wrongfully acted out against the regulations of the KHSAA and expectations of _____ County Senior High School and staff.

Viking fans need to maintain pride and spirit for those who represent _____ County. Rather than bash the opponents, focus your energy toward those sporting the school colors and praise their accomplishments. It is also necessary that the faculty take a firm, consistent action against those who poorly represent our school. You may need to interact with the students and confront them with the problems as it occurs in order to acquire better conduct from the fans.

Before the Valhalla’s distinguished name is completely defaced, the leaders among _____ County’s student body are urged to stand out and exemplify true, admirable Viking pride.